



# Evermore Community Improvement District

## District Update

July 2007 ~ Vol. 6, No. 2  
Info for District Members and Friends

Thinking back. Moving forward.

### In this Issue:

Contractor chosen for Highway 78 landscaped median construction

Informational Poster – please display in your place of business

Are medians bad for business?

An additional \$14 million on the way for U.S. 78 corridor

### Evermore:

469 parcels; 16,913 jobs;  
1,585 businesses;  
\$1 billion+ annual sales;  
\$485 million property value  
and we're just getting started

### Our Mission:

To establish a vibrant, upscale destination area; improve business development opportunities; and enhance property values by developing and promoting coordinated transportation and community character improvements to benefit property owners, business owners, and residents along the U.S. 78 corridor.

## U.S. 78 construction bid awarded

C.W. Matthews Construction Company chosen

The Georgia Department of Transportation “officially” awarded the U.S. 78 safety, median construction contract to the low bidder **C. W. Matthews Contracting Company** on June 1, 2007. The construction bid is just under \$31.5 million with nearly \$30 million already invested in engineering, design, and right-of-way acquisition the total project investment is approaching \$60 million.

Evermore CID Executive Director Brett Harrell says, “C. W. Matthews is among the premier road contractors operating in Georgia and our organization is very pleased that the Georgia Department of Transportation has finalized the project and authorized construction to begin.” Harrell added, “With tremendous support at the local, state, and federal levels over the past three years, the U.S. 78 safety, median project has been dramatically improved and will result in an enhanced corridor benefiting business, resident, and motorist.”

Over the next several months, C.W. Matthews will be mobilizing their team and utility companies will begin relocating their equipment outside the necessary right-of-way. The construction contract calls for work in four phases beginning at East Park Place in Stone Mountain and ending at State Route 124 in Snellville with a target completion date of October 31, 2009.

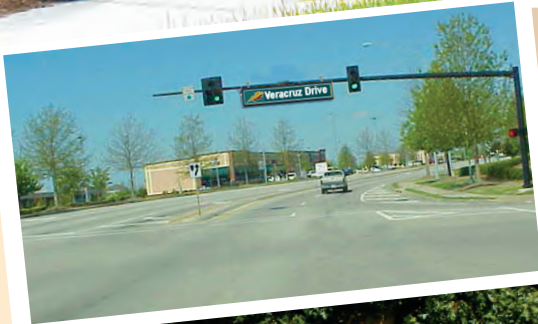
Additional public safety traffic patrols are also included in the contract to aid in maintaining a safe and operational corridor throughout construction.

Evermore CID property owners have leveraged an investment of just over \$3.3 million in additional property taxes over the past four years gaining a return in excess of 12 to 1 on this project alone. In addition to Georgia DOT and Gwinnett County, the Highway 78 project benefits from the support of U.S. Senators **Saxby Chambliss** and **Johnny Isakson** and U. S. Congressmen **John Linder**, **David Scott**, and **Lynn Westmoreland**.

On page 4 you'll find a cut-out poster with basic information about the CID and the pending construction on U.S. 78. We expect your employees and customers will have questions about the project in the coming days and months. Please help us answer those questions by displaying the poster in your place of business.

# Underway and Coming Soon to Evermore ...

*New businesses, landscaping, improved signage and lighting, sidewalks and pedestrian safety, and more ...*



Conceptual streetscapes include sidewalks and landscaped medians. Attractive street furniture adds aesthetic appeal and decorative mast arms with illuminated street lights improve safety and appearance along the Evermore corridor.

Our overlay standards require higher quality monument style signage improving visibility and architectural appeal.

Xpress Bus service provides choice for commuters.

Planned new businesses include upscale restaurants and high end, multi-story office developments.



Thinking back. Moving forward.

# Park Place Revitalization

*Successful study identifies community's desires*

The central goal of this study is to present a unified implementation plan for the Park Place area that will create a vibrant environment where people want to be. This requires a “sea change” in the past trends and a new vision that has just been kindled. However, this kind of transformation process will require linking a variety of strategies in a sustained, comprehensive effort in which the “whole is greater than the sum of the parts.”

A revitalized activity center offers abundant possibilities for area neighborhoods, businesses, Gwinnett County and the Evermore CID. For example, enhancing linkages and pedestrian connections between the major retailers, office parks, neighborhoods and Stone Mountain Park would improve mobility, employment and shopping options for the study area's residents and Park Place Activity Center Study businesses. In conjunction with attractive, safe streetscapes, the connectivity improvements could reinforce the activity center's image as a business and service destination of choice.



This study includes exemplary site plans to guide the redevelopment of two designated “catalyst” sites. The “catalyst” sites illustrate what could be developed in accordance with the proposed MUR Overlay zoning district. An example is shown in the Park Place Circle Catalyst Site above. It illustrates the concept of walkable mixed-use development that incorporates a mixture of owned housing for seniors and singles; incorporates a gridded street network in the redevelopment plan, opening up new public streets to relieve existing traffic jams; and incorporates highly visible public spaces and landscaping that will create a signature identity for the area.

Appropriately-scaled mixed-use developments can support a vital live-work-play center while reducing auto dependence. Traffic management and road design strategies are presented to reclaim the Park Place study area for pedestrian and neighborhood use as well as its service as one of the County's major commute routes. Creating a clearly defined gateway for the U.S. 78 corridor as it continues eastward will signal renewal and sense of place, and involvement of all residents should yield a greater collaboration in support of the entire Evermore CID's improved function and image.

Recent and projected changes in the Park Place study area's demographics and economy dictate that the time for initiating proactive change in this Park Place study area is urgent. This study presents a coordinated plan with targeted public and private reinvestment that have been grounded in extensive community participation sessions that can stem the Park Place study area's decline. Fostering reinvestment for long-term stability will benefit both the residents of the Park Place study area as well as the entire county.

Finally, the best way to strengthen communities is to create opportunities for citizens to work cooperatively on the challenges that shape their community. Accomplishing this task requires both political leadership and citizen education. This study has set both the vision and the implementation framework for this task.

## GRTA Express Bus Service on U.S. 78

*Snellville to Downtown Atlanta*

A partnership between the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and Gwinnett County Transit now provides express bus service for commuters along U.S. 78. Route 418 provides commuter service to downtown Atlanta from Snellville. Four coach times are available in the morning and five in the afternoon, Monday-Friday, via Stone Mountain Freeway to I-285 and I-20. Park & Ride lots are located at Snellville First Baptist Church (2400 Main St E, Snellville, 30078) and Hewatt Road at Oakland Park Blvd. Reverse commute service is not available. This route is operated by Gwinnett County Transit. Additional route information at: [http://www.xpressga.com/Route\\_pages/Route\\_418.htm](http://www.xpressga.com/Route_pages/Route_418.htm).



# EMPLOYEES

## Say goodbye to the reversible lanes on U.S. 78! Did you know?

- We are part of the **Evermore CID** (Community Improvement District) An association of 469 commercial properties representing 1,585 businesses; 16,913 jobs; \$465 million in property value; and over \$1 billion in annual sales
- The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) will soon begin a \$30 million construction project on U.S. 78 that will remove the reversible lane and light system.
- Construction will install a center, landscaped median on U.S. 78 from East Park Place Blvd in Stone Mountain to S.R. 124 in Snellville.
- Construction will be in 4 phases and the total project will take 2 years to complete.
- The Evermore CID is preparing a communciation plan for use during construction that will reassure everyone that we remain open for business.
- Additional details are available now and will be updated frequently at <http://www.evermorecid.org>

## Questions?

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## “Improvement on the way”

## Thank You

Chairman **Charles Bannister** and County Board of Commissioners for your commitment to revitalization. The Evermore CID will soon begin the design and construction of a new sewer line just east of the Yellow River that will support revitalization of underutilized and vacant property.

## Need A Speaker?

The Evermore CID has speakers available for civic groups, home owner associations, church meetings, or school gatherings. Want an update on planned road improvements, landscape enhancements, revitalization, or any of the activities of the Evermore CID?

## Did you know?

Banners must be permitted via Gwinnett County or the City of Snellville prior to use. Non-permitted banners are illegal at all times.

## Sign Up Today

Visit the Evermore CID website today and sign up to receive our e-News!  
<http://www.evermorecid.org>

## Contact Us

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## Are medians bad for business?

*Studies provide insights into the economic impact of medians*



Brett Harrell  
Executive Director

As most know, the motivating factor that led to the formation of the Evermore (formerly Highway 78) Community Improvement District was the Georgia Department of Transportation's announcement of construction of a median on U.S. 78. All agree that a median will greatly improve safety, but business owners fear a negative impact on commerce.

A growing number of state and local transportation agencies are adopting regulations aimed at managing driveway access and incorporating raised medians into roadway projects in urban areas. The purpose is to reduce traffic conflicts, protect driver safety, and improve traffic flow. To the great credit of the visionary property owners on U.S. 78, over 400 of them, and the cooperation of the Georgia DOT, Gwinnett County, and the City of Snellville, the Evermore CID has made substantial improvements to the planned median construction project that should reduce any perceived negative impact on business.

But what are the economic impacts of access management (including raised medians)?

In 1999, the Kansas DOT studied 15 businesses that had filed inverse condemnation lawsuits against the DOT on access related issues. In all but one of the cases, the claimant was still in possession of the property and still operating the business. The results provide strong anecdotal evidence that except in extreme factual situations, changes in access or traffic patterns did not cause a change in the highest and best use of the properties.

A statewide study in Iowa in 1996 revealed that corridors with completed access management projects performed better in terms of retail sales than the surrounding communities. Business failure rates were below the state average. Eighty percent of businesses surveyed reported sales at least as high after the project and the same percentage reported no customer complaints. In all cases, 90 to 100 percent of motorists surveyed had a favorable opinion of the improvements and thought the roadway was safer and traffic flow improved.

The results generally indicate that with proper planning and advance communication, the median projects have little overall adverse impact on business activity. Destination type businesses, such as certain restaurants and specialty stores, appear less sensitive to access changes than businesses that rely primarily on pass-by traffic, such as gas stations.

Presently on U.S. 78, poorly designed vehicular access not only adversely impacts the character and efficiency of the corridor, but also its economic vitality over time. Well designed, functioning, and attractive corridors with access management including inter-parcel access, parallel roadways and raised medians appear to perform well and that is the Evermore CID's goal for U.S. 78.

A combined investment of \$30 million in these enhancements and others, such as fourteen miles of new sidewalk along with a pedestrian bridge over the Yellow River, on U.S. 78 will positively shape our future for many years to come.

## CID Calendar

**July 25, 2007**

Board Meeting  
Snellville City Hall  
2:00 p.m. – public invited

**August 22, 2007**

Board Meeting  
Snellville City Hall  
2:00 p.m. – public invited

**September 26, 2007**

Board Meeting  
Snellville City Hall  
2:00 p.m. – public invited

**Shop 78**

# An additional \$14 million on the way for U.S. 78 corridor

## County approves match funding for CID projects

The Gwinnett County Commission recently approved a plan to invest \$14 million in highway improvement funds within the Evermore CID. The county's share of that sum will be \$1.75 million. The Evermore CID is contributing \$1.3 million with \$10.1 million coming from federal and \$980,000 from state sources.

The improvements include construction of a parallel pedestrian bridge over the Yellow River and an upgrade of the U.S. 78/McGee Road intersection. They also include the construction of up to 4 miles of parallel access roads to reduce much of the stop-and-go traffic created by motorists turning into businesses along the route. Design work for those improvements is expected to start this summer. The projects could be complete in 2009.

"It's a big day," Gwinnett Commissioner **Mike Beaudreau** said. "Three years from now, Highway 78 will look so different." Beaudreau was referring to other planned improvements for the route, including benches, decorative lighting, landscaping, and illuminated street signs.

But the positive impact for the estimated 65,000 motorists who drive the route every day will be more than cosmetic, officials say. The parallel access roads, which will run behind existing businesses on U.S. 78, will reduce congestion created by cars pulling in and out of parking lots along the highway.

**"Our goal is to increase your property values and improve your business"**

*Contractor chosen for U.S. 78 median construction  
Tear-out informational poster  
Are medians bad for business?*

